

# DRAFT

## LEWISHAM SCHOOLS FORUM

*Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 15th October 2020*

Membership (Quorum = 40% i.e. 9)    ✓ = present    ✕ = absent    a = apologies  
s = substitute

		Attendance				
Primary School Headteachers		12/12	16/01	09/07	15/10	Date of Appointment
Paul Moriarty	Good Shepherd	a	a	✓	✕	Dec 2018
Manda George	Torridon Primary	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2018
Sharon Lynch	St William of York	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2018
Keith Barr	Kender	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2018
Matthew Ringham	Our Lady & St Philip Neri	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2018
Nursery School Headteacher						
Nikki Oldhams	Clyde Nursery				✓	Oct 2020
Secondary School Headteachers						
Naill Hand	Prendergast Ladywell	✓	✓	✓	✓	July 2019
VACANT						
Mark Phillips	Deptford Green		✓	✓	✓	Jan 2020
VACANT						
Special School Headteacher						
Lynne Haines	Greenvale	a	✓	✓	✓	Oct 2018

<b>Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher</b>						
Heather Johnston	Abbey Manor	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2020
<b>Primary School Governors</b>						
Rosamund Clarke	Perrymount	a	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2018
VACANT						
<b>Secondary &amp; Special School Governors</b>						
Pat Barber	Bonus Pastor	a	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2018
VACANT						
VACANT						
<b>Academies</b>						
Dr Tesca Bennett	Haberdashers' Knights Academy	✓	✓	✗	✓	Oct 2018
VACANT						
<b>14-19 Consortium Rep</b>						
Asfa Sohail	Lewisham Southwark College	a	✓	✓	✓	Mar 2019
<b>Early Years – PVI</b>						
VACANT						
<b>Diocesan Authorities</b>						
Sara Sanbrook-Davies	Southwark Diocesan Board of Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2019
Yvonne Epale	Education Commission – Catholic Diocese of Southwark	a	✓	a	✓	Feb 2018

<b>Lynne Haines</b>	<b>Forum Chair</b>	✓	a	✓	✓	<b>Oct 2017</b>
<b>Keith Barr</b>	<b>Forum Vice-Chair</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>Oct 2017</b>

<b>Also Present</b>	
Angela Scattergood	
Mala Dadlani	
Dipesh Gajmer	
Pele Moaolorunduro	
Martin Cunningham	
Tony Marnham	
Dorte Newman	
Matthias Clarke	
Matt Ringham	

**1. Apologies and Acceptance of Apologies**

None.

**2. Declaration of Interests**

None.

**3. Minutes of the Meeting – 9 July 2020**

Agreed.

**4. Matters Arising**

None

Keith and Lynne voted in for new term dates; it is not clear when they started. Mala to review the recast of membership.

*Q Pat Barber: What is term of office for the forum?*

**5. Updates from the DfE**

The purpose of the report was to provide updates received from the Department of Education since the last forum meeting - mainly reflecting the 2021/22 DSG funding.

Table 1, summarises this point.

2021/22, estimated using last year's data, this is called a partial settlement £/pupil; the final being announced in December 2020.

Growth fund. Forum agreed that all growth was added to the APT tool. Growth is paying for unexpected bulge classes. Growth funding is currently assumed at 2020/21 levels and so remains a risk.

Schools Block has provisionally increased by £14M, this is not new money per se, but mainly a streamline of existing funding. £9M is existing money (grants). The real uplift is about 2%.

Central services block funds services provided to schools - predominantly statutory requirements. We had a reduction of £700k last year and there is a further £500k reduction in next year's budget which is anticipated.

High Needs block. Potentially £5M increase in funding, however this includes approximately £500k of funding to cover existing grants e.g. Teachers Pay and Pension grants for Special schools and centrally employed teaching staff.

High Needs is under considerable pressure as mentioned in our last meeting. The pressure on the HNB continues to increase despite a mitigation plan progressing. The pressure is mainly in the FE sector.

Early Years block - we have not received any information on funding for EY to date. It is also not clear how the streamlining of grants will work for EY and we are seeking further clarity from the DfE.

Schools Forum should note that for Schools Block, Lewisham is one of the highest funded councils in the country, but one of the lowest funded inner London Boroughs.

Pupil premium -2020/21 to expect a small increase in funding/pupil for Pupil Premium, primary £25/pupil, secondary £20/pupil and looked after pupils at £4/pupil.

New grants received:-

Covid Catch-up grant premium, **one off** @ £1B. £650m to go to schools in 3 tranches adjusted to the October 2020 Census; we expect the last payment in summer 2021. The grant is paying £80/pupil in primary and secondary schools and £240/pupil special and PRU. This is an academic year grant so must be spent by end of Summer 2021.

National tutoring programme. This has been put in place to offer schools subsidised support to deliver the additional support to pupils where schools run the risk around the quality of provision. It is a DfE centrally procured service, but is subsidised by part of the overall Covid grant.

PE & Sports Grant - has been confirmed at same level as last year, this is pupil number driven.

Covid grant claim - confirmation that 21 schools claims have been approved, other schools who have claimed but not received any funding yet, will now have a first element paid to them, *but any funding over and above the standard 3 headings provided within the claim forms, will take another 6 weeks to confirm. (Schools Forum to note that we have now received an update to this which will be discussed at the meeting)*

Q, Nikki Oldhams: statement, maintained nurseries are not included in the above claims.  
*Mala, yes that is correct. The matter has been raised with the DfE, who are clear that they do not anticipate Nursery schools to be part of the Covid claims process.*

Q Niall Hand, what enhanced % should schools be using for the November budget submission, to cover the grants moving to the ISB.

*Mala, suggested that the two are kept separate. Assume funding for the grants to be similar to current levels, increasing/decreasing relative to pupil number movement.*

Q Martin Cunningham, thanked Mala for bringing clarification, Niall has complication being an all through school and PFI, are you comfortable with the mix? Should we include PFI or leave it stagnant?

*Mala, advised that the specific query can be dealt with outside of the meeting and the split between pupil driven and premises cost will be provided.*

## **Schools Forum Noted the Following: Noted the content of the paper**

### **6. Scheme for Financing Schools Updates**

Each year the DfE provides revisions to the Scheme as appropriate. The report advises on the necessary changes. As the changes are prescriptive, a consultation is not required.

DfE has limited the changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools to the following this year:

The main 3 things are:

Schools must complete 3 yr budget planning from 2021/22; we do this already.

DfE require that a school prepare a deficit recovery plan before they go into a 5% deficit, this is measured at the end of each financial year. This will apply from March 2021.

RPA agreement, this is the Government form of insurance; a clause enabling LA schools to join if they wish to.

Mala confirmed a conversation with the council's insurance department. i.e. the schools who are currently buying insurance through the LA are in a contractual position which ends Dec 2021.

Schools wishing to leave would need to inform insurance before July 2021, when the insurance service will consider options for retender based on the number of schools in contract.

The RPA does not give clear information. It appears that figures given are for basic cover. The cost goes up to cover trips etc. which is not included. Schools will have to buy insurance separately to cover this, which could make the RPA offer less favourable.

The RPA and Lewisham Insurance offer are effectively two very different products. The Insurance team will join the forum meeting in January 2021. It is proposed that the insurance team will give a presentation on the council insurance offer.

Next stage would be for the lead officer, Karen Eaton, to attend Heads meetings e.g leadership meetings to provide q&a sessions. This would be over February and March 2021.

Schools would need to express their wishes to join Lewisham insurance or opt out by early June. The council will need to understand who is in scope to finalise the cover. Insurance will go to the market to secure the best deal.

Q Pat Barber, comment: she has investigated RPA and it was a lot more expensive

*Pat's comment was noted and Mala agreed and stated that schools need to be careful and ensure that they get the cover that they need.*

Q Nikki Oldhams, asked what the timeframe was for the update of the Scheme for Financing Schools?

*Mala, the document is live, we just need time to update and publish it on our portal.*

## **Schools Forum Noted the Following: Noted the content of the paper**

### **7. Dedicated Schools Grant 2020/21**

The purpose of this report was to update Schools Forum, with regards to the 2020/21 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

At the July meeting Schools Forum was advised of a provisional £110k overspend. At that time we did not have the Early Years (EY) final funding. Following the finalisation of the EY data, this has resulted in a government claw back of £547k in the EY block, giving a final outturn £657k overspend. This will be a first call on this year funding in 2020/21 - to repay the deficit. We are already £2.3-4M overspent on the High Needs budget.

Since the April original data, of the EHCP's we have an increase of 45 children. Under 5s and Post-secondary give continuous pressures and this forms part of our mitigation plan.

The EY funding is provisional. It is based on the January 2020 and January 2021 pupil census data. The demand is uncertain, but providers are funded in line with anticipated take-up. In theory it shouldn't be a cost pressure as we should have less pupils to pay out.

Q No questions asked

## **Schools Forum Noted the Following: Noted the content of the paper**

### **8. Schools Health Check**

The report provides forum on an update based on the June budget plans. The report also updates with regards to further development work intended to strengthen the support provided to Lewisham schools.

Previously, there was insufficient engagement with schools. In agreement with Schools Forums request for more support, changes have been introduced over the last two years which have resulted in increased support to schools to help them improve their financial management.

This year RAG ratings have been introduced. The RAG ratings are to enable resource deployment to support schools. The RAG ratings are not for wider scrutiny or publication but to assist schools to consider working practices with finance and where suitable to engage in a voluntary process known as Deficit Prevention Plans.

We feel this is forward thinking, and feedback from schools has been very positive.

Q Sharon Lynch, add appreciation for the approach that Mala has taken, as a one form entry school, we do not have the capacity so we really appreciate the support, thank you Mala.

Q Rosamund Clarke, asked for clarification on the submission on spreadsheets, the blue column where it says DfE.

*Mala, it is DfE guidance. We are looking at starting a benchmarking club later this year, and it will be based on local information. We are also doing a pilot test with a few schools.*

*Mala, - information is through contacts including the SRMA's; it is only a guideline. Benchmarking is only for guidance because every school is different but it can be used for meaningful discussion.*

Q Mark Phillips, As long as it is for information. Clear curriculum planning and consistency through leadership cost. As a borough it would help if we had this and give more conducive comparison/analysis work.

*Mala - Benchmarking will be extended to secondary schools and special schools*

## **Schools Forum Noted the Following: Noted the content of the paper**

### **9. High Needs Mitigation Plan.**

Presentation on the actions currently being progressed as part of the mitigation plan.

Victoria Redgrave - as part of this forum, we were asked to draft a mitigation plan. This Sub officers working group for the High Needs block has 6 objectives:-

- CYP in the right provision. Clear, transparent and fair admission criteria across Lewisham

special schools that meets demand.

- Increase provision to meet growing demand. Reduce spend on OOB provision and pressure on HNB.
- Effective SEND sufficiency and place planning strategy.
- Provide clarity and indication of the cost to the LA of the future pressure on HNB. Details to support the LA strategy to reduce the overall spend on SEND provision and pressure on the HNB.
- Improve quality of provision and the SEND local offer, across the sector.
- Improve quality of inclusion and provision across Lewisham mainstream schools.

Timeline, written before the sad news of Claudia, so name may appear, Vicky apologised if this was the case, it is not intentional.

This is provision led, to fund young people and their needs. We are looking for the right support within the right areas, with one is transition. We have set up a pilot project for these children.

We are looking to potentially set up hubs looking at multiagency requirements, and capacity within the LA.

We are also looking at any increased resource provision, that they are placed correctly to provide positive outcome. We are meeting with schools who have expressed an interest in having a Resource Base.

SEND efficiency planning, we are looking to move pupils back into borough, and premises in current schools.

We are looking to review the early years Inclusion Fund, and for someone from the SEND advisory team to attend Children at Risk meetings as well as developing the education commissioner role to ensure we have full understanding of the SEND provision and pressures - and to make sure we develop expertise, ensuring value for money.

We are looking at ways to keep SEND pupils in borough and reduce sending people out to expensive provision that is no better.

We are looking to improve Lewisham inclusion policy - what does the provision look like? We are looking for the same quality from all settings. We want to be positively perceived.

Q Niall Hand, Thanks, really good document and it is appreciated. We can see a plan and ambition. Observation - looking at the number of special schools resources, have you compared Lewisham against neighbouring boroughs? Encourage schools to have more resource bases, looking at existing capacity, has any mapping been done?

*Vicky - looked at capacity, we are currently at capacity. Looked at locality of pupils, flip side, schools put forward to have resource provision. We have not scoped on places comparing to other LA's, which is a good exercise to take up. Other factor, we have pretty high number of pupils with EHCP so again, may need to compare, looking at other LA's with equivalent EHCP's, I will look at it and report back.*

Q Asfa Sohail, How do you plan to implement your provision to over 18's? what is expected from

me?

*Vicky, we plan to book a meeting to talk to post 16 providers. We have presentations of pupils we would like to place. We are looking at individualised talks with providers to see how we meet the cohort's needs.*

Mala - as Schools Forum, we need to recognise this partnership piece of work to secure the best outcome for pupils in exceptional challenging financial circumstances. There is a duty on the LA and Forum to deliver on SEN within the funding available.

Lynne Haines - if you are looking to extend the membership of the group, Martin Cunningham is happy to sit on the board. We need to make sure that we have got enough people and the right people.

Mala - it does need to expand. It is a small group, particularly if anyone is absent. Email forum to invite additional members. Process to support most vulnerable with limited funds available.

Lynne - there is currently limited representation for some groups of schools.

Vicky - that would be very helpful.

Lynne - want to see how many forum members would like to join.

Mala - not exclusive to forum; the group is commissioned by the forum. Use offers for recruitment drive.

Martin Cunningham and Mark Phillips to be added to High Needs working Group.

## **10. Verbal Updates.**

- Schools Meals Catering Contract

Fiona, Lewisham will need to consider tender of the School Meals Contract. This is expected to take place, at the end of the year or early next year, to commence 1<sup>st</sup> August.

Pat Barber - will schools be involved with the tender?

*Fiona, we will ask schools if they want to join, it will be a weekly commitment through November. It is a scoped process and we welcome thoughts and impact.*

Sharon Lynch, how many schools will they be catering for? Can anyone join?  
Second question, should the surplus go back to the schools? Will it not go back at the end of the contract?

*Fiona - surplus is used to reduce future costs. An additional cost of Covid of £500k, but we will still have an approximate £1.3M surplus. There will be a balance going back to schools and we can do some calculations/ forecast.*

Sharon Lynch that would be helpful.

Sharon Lynch, How many schools do you think will go into the contract?

*Fiona - don't know, we are waiting for full governors meeting. Willing to attend any governors meeting. Happy to discuss if anyone wants to join, and happy to shape going in and out of the contract if anyone wants to.*

Lynne - shame that some schools have dropped out.

Mala, we are aware some schools are looking at options outside this, but we need to make sure that they follow the rules for contract tendering within Lewisham and also European legislation. Some of the processes are not contracts but expression of interest.

If LA has more schools, we have a stronger hand to get a better price. The goal post will change.

*Fiona - schools need to be mindful how external contractors lay out how they are collecting FSM. It can look as though the meals are free when they are not. You have to pay for free school meals. Happy to go through contracts even if they are not part of the Lewisham contracts.*

Sharon, - thank you, we do appreciate this. Wish we were here a year ago; we have to live with what we have committed to.

Fiona, happy to review and do comparisons.

Lynne - really helpful.

- RPA

Already discussed.

## **11. Any Other Business.**

Mala, Just a gentle reminder regarding the New Heads meetings next week

This is to meet our team and to find out how we support new heads.

Membership for schools forum needs to be revisited once we have final pupil data from October 2020 Census, including Academy schools.

Future meetings

10<sup>th</sup> December 2020

21<sup>st</sup> January 2021 (subject to change dependent on DfE timelines)

All meetings will be held between 16.30 and 18.30

**Sub Group meetings**

<b>High Needs Sub Group</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2020
28 <sup>th</sup> January 2021